

132 acres in Buckingham Township for preservation, Georgiana Coles has demonstrated her unquestionable dedication to preserving Bucks County's natural history.

I want to recognize Georgiana Coles for her hard work and continued dedication to the preservation of open space. I and the residents of the 8th Congressional District of Pennsylvania thank her.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KILDEE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. TIERNEY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, the Preamble to our Constitution lays out the basic functions of government and notably featured is the need to provide for the common defense.

National security is the single most important purpose of government; all of the other blessings of liberty flow from it. Throughout much of this country's history, Senator Arthur Vandenberg's famous maxim that "Partisanship must end at the water's edge" has guided the formulation and execution of America's national security policy.

Unfortunately, over the past several years that bipartisan tradition has been undermined by the Republican Party which has sought to convince Americans that only one party could be entrusted to preserve our Nation's military strength and its position as the world's preeminent power.

This unwillingness to listen to other voices has reached its zenith under the current administration, which took office with one overriding principle, that was to guide American national security policy. Yet when the previous administration, that of President Clinton, was for it, they were against it. The result is an America that is less

safe than it should be and less safe than it needs to be.

Our military has been stretched to the absolute limits in Iraq, leaving us precious little ability to respond to other contingencies around the globe. Overseas, we are less often seen as a force for good in the world, and surveys of public opinion consistently show that we as a Nation are viewed negatively, even by our friends in Europe.

At home, we have frittered away the 4½ years since September 11 instead of making real strides in safeguarding the Nation from terrorist attack.

In Iraq, a stubborn refusal to commit enough troops to save the lives and pacify the country in the months after the invasion has led to a protracted fight against the Baathists and Islamist insurgents that has claimed now more than 2,300 American lives.

And finally, we have failed to reckon with the Achilles heel of our national security, our reliance on foreign oil to supply our energy needs.

Clearly, Americans want and deserve change. Last week, Members of our party from both the House and the Senate unveiled a comprehensive blueprint to protect the American people and to restore our Nation's position of international leadership.

Our plan, Real Security, was devised with the assistance of a broad range of experts, former military officers, retired diplomats, law enforcement personnel, homeland security experts and others, who helped identify key areas where current policies have failed and where new ones were needed.

During the next several weeks, Democratic Members of the House will be doing a series of 1-hours where we will discuss the particulars of the Real Security plan. Tonight, we will give an overview of that plan, and in the following weeks we will flesh out each of the five pillars of the Democratic Real Security plan for the country.

It is a tough and smart strategy to rebuild our military, equip and train our first responders and others on the front lines and here at home, provide needed benefits to our troops and veterans, fully man and equip our National Guard, promote alternative fuels and reduce our dependence on foreign oil, restore Americans' confidence in their government's ability to respond in the face of a terrorist attack or natural disaster.

To protect the American people, we will immediately implement the recommendations of the independent bipartisan 9/11 Commission and finally protect our ports and airports, our borders, mass transit systems, our chemical and nuclear power plants, and our food and water supplies from terrorist attack.

After September 11, all Americans trusted the President to take the steps necessary to keep our country safe. Since then, inadequate planning, sometimes incompetent policies, have failed to make Americans as safe as we should be. The tragedy of Hurricane

Katrina showed that the Federal Government was still not prepared to respond.

Under the administration's leadership, the war in Iraq began with intelligence that was at best wrong and at worst manipulated. 140,000 of our finest young people were sent into Iraq without an adequate plan for success.

Our ports and other critical infrastructure remain vulnerable, while both soldiers in the field and first responders at home lack the basic equipment and resources they were promised.

Both in the Persian Gulf and on our own gulf coast, lucrative, no-bid contracts have gone to companies like Halliburton, Kellogg, Brown&Root and others with friends in high places.

Despite record high fuel prices, our country remains heavily dependent on foreign oil because of an energy policy that benefits the big oil interests.

The Real Security plan rests on five pillars that my colleagues and I will introduce to you tonight. They are the creation of a 21st-century military, a smart strategy to win the war on terror, a plan to secure the homeland, a plan to move forward in Iraq, and a proposal for achieving energy independence for America by 2020.

Under Real Security, a Democratic Congress will rebuild a state-of-the-art military by making needed investments in equipment and manpower so that we can project power to protect America wherever and whenever necessary.

We have all heard the stories of parents using their own money to purchase body armor for their own children serving in Iraq. I personally asked Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld about the shortage of body armor, about the lack of adequately armored vehicles, and the holdups in development of equipment to counter roadside bombs that have killed and maimed so many of our troops. Despite his assurances, there are still problems and young Americans are still paying the price.

Under Real Security, Democrats will guarantee all of our troops have the protective gear, equipment, and training they need and are never sent to war without accurate intelligence and a strategy for success.

I have been to Iraq now three times; and I visited our wounded troops here at home, there, and in Germany. I have spoken at the funerals of my constituents who have been killed in Iraq, and I have sat with their families as they have mourned. These experiences have reinforced my sense of commitment to ensuring the well-being of America's soldiers and their families and our veterans.

Democrats will enact a GI bill of Rights for the 21st century that guarantees our troops, active, reserve and retired, our veterans and their families, receive the pay, health care, mental health services, and other benefits they have earned and deserve.

Our active military are stretched to the breaking point, but our Guard and